

STAT

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BENTSEN
BY PAT REMICK

Sen. Lloyd Bentsen, D-Texas, said Thursday all Central American nations must be involved in finding a peaceful solution to the turmoil in the region.

But Bentsen, who returned this week from a five-day trip to Nicaragua, El Salvador and Honduras, said he believes the United States must help in the negotiating process.

"It has to be all the Central American countries involved," he said. "We have to assist in the process to try to bring this to a peaceful conclusion."

"We have to bring a stop to this exportation of revolution."

Bentsen, who toured Central America at the behest of the Central Intelligence Agency, said he is particularly concerned about human rights violations in the region and reported Nicaraguan boasts of exporting revolution.

Bentsen, a member of the Senate Intelligence Committee and a congressional advisor to President Reagan's bipartisan commission on Central America, told reporters he met with members of rebel groups and was particularly impressed by some in Nicaragua who were "intelligent, totally committed and risking their lives."

"I was impressed with some of the contras I met who had been very much opposed to Somoza and now feel betrayed by the Sandinistas," he said, "and that the democracy they all aspired to is being denied."

Bentsen said, however, that he does not believe "it's realistic" that they can overthrow the government. He also said it is unrealistic to believe the flow of arms from Nicaragua to El Salvador can be stopped.

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EXCERPTED